

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 L-02 OES-03 OFA-01 H-02 INT-05 CIAE-00

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FOLLOWING RECEIVED FROM QUAYAQUIL MARCH 24 BEING REPEATED FOR  
YOUR INFO:

QUOTE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, EFIS, PLOS, CASC, EC US

SUBJ: NEPTUNE INCIDENT

REF: STATE 63508

1. FOLLOWING ARE MY OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING QUESTIONS RAISED  
IN REFTTEL.

2. UNDER COVER OF MEMORANDUM DATED MARCH 13 I SENT COPIES OF  
THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MARCH 7 GOE NAVAL TRIBUNAL AGAINST  
LARKINS AND THE TWO BYRDS TO WALMGRXLARKE (COPY TO JOHN NEGRO-  
ONTE). THE ENCLOSURES TO THIS MEMO INCLUDED STATEMENTS BY  
THE THREE U.S. CITIZENS, STATEMENTS BY ECUADOREAN GUARDS IN-  
VOLVED IN THE EARLY MORNING NEPTUNE INCIDENT, AND THE SENTENCE  
HANDLED DOWN BY THE PORT CAPTAIN. THESE DOCUMENTS HELP EXPLAIN  
THE INITIAL INCIDENT THAT PROVOKED THE ECUADOREAN NAVY ASSAULT  
ON THE NEPTUNE.

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3. LARKINS IS CARRIED ON THE SHIP'S PAPERS AS ALTERNATE MASTER. THIS PERMITS HIM TO ACT AS LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BOAT OWNER IN THE MASTER'S ABSENCE. THIS DESIGNATION ADDED TO THE CONFUSION, HOWEVER, BECAUSE LARKINS OFTEN REFERRED TO HIMSELF AS "CAPTAIN", A TITLE ACCEPTED BY SOME OF THE ECUADOREANS INVOLVED. HE IS ALSO REFERRED TO BY DIFFERENT PEOPLE AS "NAVIGATOR", "ENGINEER", AND "MATE". FIRST MATE IS PROBABLY THE TITLE THAT BEST DESCRIBES HIS RESPONSIBILITIES.

4. SORTING THROUGH THE CONFLICTING REPORTS OF THE LARKINS' INCIDENT, IT IS DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED. IT APPEARS, HOWEVER, THAT WITHOUT DOUBT HE WAS THE INSTIGATOR OF THE INCIDENT. RETURNING TO THE SHIP WITH MANY DRINKS UNDER HIS BELT, LARKINS STARTED ORDERING THE GUARDS AROUND, SCUFFLED WITH ONE OR MORE OF THEM, ORDERED THEM OFF THE VESSEL, AND REFUSED TO LET MORE GUARDS COME ON BOARD. THE EXTENT OF PHYSICAL CONTACT BETWEEN LARKINS AND GUARDS IS MAIN ITEM IN DISPUTE, WITH VERSIONS RANGING FROM A LITTLE PUSHING AND SHOVING TO LARKINS DECKING ONE OF THE GUARDS AND REPEATEDLY HITTING HIM IN THE FACE WITH HIS FIST. I BELIEVE THE LATTER DESCRIPTION IS CLOSER TO THE TRUTH THAN THE FORMER

5. CAPTAIN GALARZA'S ROLE IN EVENTS LEADING TO ASSAULT ON NEPTUNE WERE TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE LARKINS' INCIDENT AND ORDER THAT GUARDS BE AGAIN STATIONED ON NEPTUNE. OUR KNOWLEDGE OF GALARZA'S INVOLVEMENT HAS BEEN REPORTED IN STATEMENTS BY ROSARIO, FIGUEROA, MOSS AND DEWITT. (STATEMENTS BY MOSS AND FIGUEROA WERE FORWARDED TO AMBASSADOR, WITH COPIES TO WALTER CLARKE AND IRA LEVY, UNDER COVER OF MEMORANDUM DATED MARCH 12.)

6. THE GUARD WHOSE TOOTH WAS BROKEN IS NAMED VICTOR BENITEZ. HE WAS ONE OF THE GUARDS ON BOARD THE NEPTUNE DURING THE LARKINS INCIDENT. ACCORDING TO HIS STATEMENT HE WAS HIT SEVERAL TIMES IN THE FACE BY LARKINS.

7. TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, THE DAMAGES TO UNIFORMS, ETC., CLAIMED BY ECUADOREAN GUARDS WERE INCURRED IN THE LARKINS' INCIDENT AND NOT IN THE SUBSEQUENT ASSAULT ON THE NEPTUNE. THIS WAS MY UNDERSTANDING WHEN I SIGNED THE "ACTA". HOWEVER, I MAY HAVE MISUNDERSTOOD GALARZA WHO AT TIMES WAS LESS THAN COHERENT. SOME LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LOST ITEMS WERE SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED BY ECUADOREAN GUARDS IN THEIR STATEMENTS REGARDING THE LARKINS' INCIDENT.

8. LARKINS DID NOT MAKE A FORMAL STATEMENT TO CONSULAR OFFICERS CONCERNING THE NEPTUNE INCIDENTS. HIS IMPRISONMENT DID NOT PREVENT SUCH A STATEMENT FROM BEING TAKEN BECAUSE WE HAD NO PROBLEMS IN VISITING LARKINS AFTER HE WAS SENTENCED BY THE PORT CAPTAIN. LARKINS' STATEMENT TO ECUADOREAN AUTHORITIES DID NOT DIFFER IN

ANY IMPORTANT RESPECT FROM HIS VERSION OF THE NEPTUNE INCIDENTS THAT HE TOLD TO ME IN PRIVATE. THERE IS A SUBSTANTIAL DIFFERENCE IN THE VERSIONS OF THE LARKINS' INCIDENT GIVEN TO THE GOE NAVAL TRIBUNAL ON MARCH 7 BY LARKINS AND DON BYRD.

9. PRIOR TO RELEASE FROM DETENTION ON NAVAL BASE EARLY MORNING MARCH 11, LARKINS WAS ASKED TO SIGN STATEMENT IN ENGLISH PREPARED BY EACUADOREAN NAVAL AUTHORITIES. PURPOSE OF STATEMENT SEEMED TO BE INSURANCE POLICY IN EVENT LARKINS LATER MADE CHARGES OF MAL-TREATMENT. AFTER CONSIDERABLE DICKERING CONCERNING WORDING, WHICH WOULD DEFINITELY LIMIT STATEMENT TO PERIOD LARKINS PHYSICALLY DETAINED ON NAVAL BASE, THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT WAS SIGNED; BEGIN STATEMENT: I, JAMES LARKINS, NORTH AMERICAN CITIZEN, IN PERFECT PHYSICAL AND MENTAL CONDITION, DECLARE THAT DURING THE TIME I HAVE BEEN IN JAIL ON THE NAVAL BASE AT SALINAS, I HAVEN'T BEEN MISTREATED, AND I HAVE NO COMPLAINTS ABOUT ANYTHING OR ANYBODY WHILE I HAVE BEEN IN JAIL.

I CAN STATE THAT EVERYBODY, OFFICERS AND ENLISTED MEN HAVE ALL BEEN NICE PEOPLE TO ME SINCE I HAVE BEEN IN JAIL AND CONSEQUENTLY, I HAVE RECEIVED A FAIR TREATMENT DURING THE TIME I HAVE BEEN IN JAIL WHICH BEGAN ABOUT 2000 ON MARCH 6, 1975.

THIS IS ALL I CAN SAY IN HONOR TO TRUTH. SIGNED: JAMES LARKINS. END STATEMENT.

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## Message Attributes

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**Draft Date:** 25 MAR 1975  
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